

Guidelines on prescribing of dental products on FP10

These guidelines aim to assist GPs with information on the appropriate prescribing of dental products on FP10 prescriptions.

- GPs should not accept requests from dentists to prescribe medicines that the dentist could reasonably prescribe themselves
- GPs should not accept requests from patients to prescribe medicines that have been prescribed on a private dental script as part of private dental healthcare.
- Patients should be advised of self-care measures and signposted to purchase over the counter remedies for dental conditions where appropriate.

Medicines for dental conditions (toothpastes, mouthwashes, fluoride preparations, ulcer healing treatments etc.) on FP10 prescriptions in Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby CCG area amount to almost £12,000 annually, though this does not consider savings from analgesics and antibiotics which cannot be quantified. (Epsa data August-October 2014) These medicines are either more appropriately obtained via the patient's dentists or should be purchased over the counter.

Prescribing medicines is an integral part of many dental treatment plans and dentists are responsible for assessing their patient's condition and prescribing within their competence. If a dentist deems that a medicine is needed to treat their patient's dental condition and they are able to prescribe or direct the patient to the medicine via an appropriate route (sign-posting to self-care) then it is reasonable to expect the dentist to do so rather than involve the GP. Some dental medicines require ongoing monitoring and clinical assessment by the dentist which is in keeping with the dentist retaining responsibility for prescribing. Involving the GP in prescribing is usually unnecessary and uses valuable appointments and GPs time. GPs are also responsible for all prescribing decisions they make and for any consequent monitoring that is needed. With regards dental products, they are often not best placed to continue the monitoring needed in many cases.

Obtaining medicines for dental conditions

- Dentists can issue NHS prescriptions for medicines from the Dental Practitioners' Formulary for treatment provided within an NHS contract.
- Dentists can issue private prescriptions legally for any medicine though ethically they should restrict prescribing to their area of competence.
- In some circumstances dentists can sell medicines to patients though the regulations that cover this are complex and beyond the scope of this document.
- Patients can be signposted to appropriate forms of self-care such as community pharmacy.

Key points

- Dentists are usually best placed to assess dental problems, prescribe and monitor medicines for them
- Dentists are usually able to prescribe or direct their patients to an appropriate source of medicine without involving the GP
- GP's prescribing dental medicines makes the GP responsible for the prescribing and any monitoring required when they may not be the most appropriate clinical practitioner.
- Involving GPs unnecessarily for prescribing of dental medicines uses valuable appointments and GP time which could be better utilised.
- This does not affect a GP's ability to prescribe dental products where they are deemed to be an appropriate part of the care that the GP is providing for a patient and where the GP is happy to take responsibility for that prescribing decision.